



Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

Family Support Work Group

Minutes - Work Group Meeting - July 7, 2004 - 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon Baker Building - Room 3

Members Present: Jim Abson, Jane Beachboard, Steve Dennis, Penny Farrar, Deborah Gangluff, Jacqueline Gorton, Jim Hamilton, Jenny Kurrus, Kenneth Myers, Teri Patrick, Gwen Paul, Martha Reeder, Brenda Reynolds, Kathleen Stafford, Susan Underwood, Paula Watson, Brazier Watts, Lorie Williams.

Agenda Item #1: Welcome and Introductions - Jackie Gorton, Co-Chair

Discussion: Jackie welcomed new members, Jim Hamilton from Arkansas Children's Hospital, Ginny Kurrus from Arkansas PTA, Paula Watson from DHS, and Brazier Watts from AR Dept. of Ed. Results: Work group members were informed that we have established a regular meeting schedule for the second Tuesday of every month, beginning with September 14, 2004 from 9 - 11 a.m. We are currently trying to locate a "home."

Tasks: Everyone should mark the second Tuesday of each month on their calendars for a regular meeting of the work group. If anyone has ideas about a permanent meeting location, please contact Jackie or Susan with information.

Agenda Item #2: Update and Overview of AECCS - Martha Reeder

Discussion: Martha provided a short overview of the initiative for new members, with a reminder of the over-arching goal of school readiness and the relation of this work to that of the School Readiness Indicators (SRI) Initiative.

Results: A summary of priority indicators of school readiness from the SRI Initiative is available at: http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/summschooreadind.html

Copies of the SRI publication, "Getting Ready For School" were distributed to work group members. Martha also shared other recent publications related to school readiness, including the Kindergarten Readiness Calendar and Teacher Guide, and the Kindergarten Readiness Checklist Brochure.

Web address for "Getting Ready For School": http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/schoolreadiness.html

Agenda Item #3: Overview of Logic Model Development - Deborah Gangluff

Discussion: Deborah reminded work group members of basic definitions related to the logic model:

Results:

Co-chairs:

Jackie Gorton – 501-661-2494 – jgorton@healthyarkansas.com
Susan Underwood – 501-682-5761 – sunderwood@arkedu.k12.ar.us

(Agenda Item #3 continued) - Discussion:

- Problems/Issue What we want to address
- Goal Broad overview
- Outcome Objectives must be measurable, including a time component
- Inputs money, staff, facilities
- Output (examples) list of resources, statewide database, system of standards/accountability
- Activities specific things to do (i.e. make a brochure)
- Short-term Outcomes one year or less
- Long-term Outcomes three year time frame

Results:

Co-Chairs Jackie Gorton and Susan Underwood grouped the 8 MCH Goals for systems planning into three categories, and divided participants into three groups to brainstorm on specific objectives related to the goals.

Agenda Item #4: Small Group - Families and Children Children & Families

- 1. Children's basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing) will be met by parents/caretakers who have the support and resources to provide a nurturing family environment
- 2. Families of young children will be able to achieve self-sufficiency (Group members: Steve Dennis, Penny Farrar, Gwen Paul, Susan Underwood, Brazier Watts)

Discussion:

Group members discussed the lack of good jobs, and the lack of adequate and safe housing. Families need to know more about the nutritional needs of their children – there needs to be a better system of getting information out to parents/families. Systems need to reach diverse types of households (i.e. non-English speaking, etc.) There is a need to increase ways of reaching border-line children with special needs.

Result:

- 1. Children's basic needs(see above)
 - "One System" family friendly resources* available for all and supported by enhanced case management
 - Eliminate "turfism"
 - Easy application data system
- 2. (Self-sufficiencysee above)
 - Full employment with a livable wage for all who want it
 - Benefits, childcare, transportation
 - Education and training
 - Continued support by "one system" case management

*Education/training, early childhood special ed., disability services, child care, in-home, mental health, transportation, substance abuse, housing, early childhood assessment, faith-based outreach (especially when other resources do not meet the needs, and as a referral agent for services), medical

Agenda Item #5: Small Group - Communities

Communities

- 1. Communities will engage families as meaningful partners in the development of policies and programs that will ultimately influence their well-being
- 2. Communities will intentionally link services, programs and providers to create a strong base of support for families
- 3. Community businesses will support expanded family-friendly policies

(Group members: Jane Beachboard, Jackie Gorton, Ginny Kurrus, Teri Patrick, Brenda Reynolds

Discussion:

Group members discussed the need for community-based efforts to create a better environment for families. Communities need to recognize their responsibility in providing safe neighborhoods. There is a lack of out-of-school time care, especially summer programs. Family resource centers are under-utilized. Domestic violence needs to be addressed in a preventive fashion.

Result:

- 1. Communities will engage (see above)
 - Development of focus groups led by local community representatives
 - Identify key community leaders
 - Family involvement at all levels --- boards, committees, etc.
 - Include all levels of income, education, culturalfaith-based, etc.
- 2. Communities will link . . . (see above)
 - Financial incentives for communities to link services together (i.e., awards, etc.)
 - Focus groups will address linking of services
 - Information sheets in places of high visibility ...(grocery stores, medical clinics, banks, schools, churches), also information available on web sites, local radio and newspaper, local cable access TV
 - Central location and coordinator of information for each community to address awareness of services to children/adults
- 3. Community businesses (see above)
 - Businesses participate in focus groups
 - Encourage businesses and other groups to become more participatory (i.e., sponsor, assist with funding, advertise volunteer programs for employees, assist with transportation, etc.
 - Encourage consumers to support family friendly businesses . . . (Activities: sponsor health fairs, summer programs, sports teams, etc.

Agenda Item #6: Small group - State-level policies

State Policies

- 1. State level decision-makers will engage families as meaningful partners in the development of policies and programs that will ultimately influence their well-being
- 2. State policies will support family self-sufficiency
- 3. Application processes for state-supported programs will be streamlined and coordinated (*Group members: Jim Abson, Jim Hamilton, Kenneth Myers, Kathleen Stafford, Lorie Williams*)

Discussion:

State systems should collaborate to strengthen networks of support in local communities.

Availability and accessibility is a huge issue, and needs to be less of a hurdle to families. The potential of local schools as a resource to families has been under-utilized.

Results:

- 1. State level decision-makers ... (see above)
 - Enlist meaningful input from families (locally and individually, in a non-intimidating atmosphere - developing a small, local support focus group to be involved in the policy-making process
- 2. State policies.... (see above)
 - Define "self-sufficiency"
 - Involve families in functioning responsibly and interdependently on an on-going basis, still involving local focus support groups.
- 3. Application process (see above)
 - State-level streamlined application
 ("Arkansas Family Services Application" ...)
 - Universal needs assessment application that is applicable for all state/county/regional levels
 - Assist parents in becoming aware of process, as well as educate agencies/offices/communities
 - Use of statewide computer technology perhaps a statewide data base that is available for all state supported programs
 - Design data system so that it can be usable for researchers for help in writing grants, etc. generating resource to address stated needs

Agenda Item #7: Summary & Wrap-up Discussion: Martha suggested that we might obtain some ways to enlist corporate involvement through the organization, Corporate Voices for

Tasks: Mark the following dates on your calendars:

Working Families.

- August 31, 2004 Joint meeting of all AECCS work groups 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock. (directions and reminder is forthcoming)
- September 12, 2004 next Family Support Work Group meeting 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. -- location to be announced

Remember to check the link on DHS Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education to up-date on the progress of entire initiative:

http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/aeccs.html